REMARKS

In view of the following discussion, the Applicants submit that none of the claims now pending in the application are indefinite under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §112 or are obvious under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §103. Thus, the Applicants believe that all of the presented claims are in condition for allowance.

I. REJECTION OF CLAIM 32 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112

The Examiner rejects claim 32 as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. §112. In response, the Applicants have amended claim 32 in order to more clearly recite aspects of the present invention.

In particular, claim 32 has been amended to delete the phrase "said runtime environment." In light of this amendment, the Applicants submit that claim 32 is sufficiently definite within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §112. As such, the Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 32 under 35 U.S.C. §112 be withdrawn.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-2, 4-9, 11-13, AND 32 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner rejects claims 1-2, 4-9, 11-13, and 32 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the Grindrod patent (U.S. Patent No. 6,868,413, issued March 15, 2005, hereinafter referred to as "Grindrod") in view of the Sluiman et al. patent (U.S. Patent No. 6,590,589, issued July 8, 2003, hereinafter "Sluiman"). In response, the Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 32 in order to more clearly recite aspects of the present invention.

The Examiner's attention is respectfully directed to the fact that Grindrod and Sluiman, singly or in any permissible combination, fail to teach or suggest the novel invention of enabling editing of a rule-based application during runtime processing of the application's ruleset in an environment in which the rule-based application executes (*i.e.*, after the ruleset has been compiled), as recited in Applicants' independent claims 1 and 32.

By contrast, Grindrod at best teaches that business rules may be customized or edited at design time. In other words, Grindrod teaches a method for customizing or editing business rules prior to runtime processing of the rules in their intended execution environment. Nothing in Grindrod teaches or suggests editing of business rules during runtime processing (*i.e.*, post-authoring).

The Examiner cites several specific portions of Grindrod in the Final Office Action that allegedly teach "editing of business rules in a runtime (*i.e.*, post-execution) environment" (Final Office Action, Page 12). However, none of the many cited portions of Grindrod teaches the claimed step of enabling editing of a rule-based application during runtime processing of the application's ruleset in an environment in which the rule-based application executes (*i.e.*, after the ruleset has been compiled), as recited in Applicants' independent claims 1 and 32.

First, the Examiner submits that "an off-the-shelf business process automation software [as taught by Grindrod] is utilized in a runtime/execution/deployment environment" (Final Office Action, Pages 12-13). Even taking the Examiner's assertion to be true, however, this still does not teach editing of a rule-based application in the alleged runtime/execution/deployment environment, as claimed by the Applicants.

Second, the Examiner notes that "the various user interfaces of the business rules management console [of Grindrod] allow an administrator or an end user to create and/or modify (edit) business rules in order to customize business processes. The business rules management console operates in a runtime/execution/deployment environment to facilitate management of the business rule application since the business rules management console is a separate software program executing in the administrator/end user's environment" (Final Office Action, Page 13). The Applicants respectfully submit that this disclosure at best teaches editing of business rules during runtime of the business rules management console software, but not during runtime of the business rules themselves (*i.e.*, in their intended execution environment), as claimed by the Applicants. That is, the "runtime/execution/deployment environment" indicated by the Examiner is not the runtime environment to which the Applicants' claims refer, in which runtime processing of the business rules occurs.

Third, the Examiner notes that Grindrod "discloses that the business rule creating/modifying process includes a runtime verification process. This clearly indicates that a runtime environment is involved in the customization" (Final Office Action, Page 13). The Applicants respectfully submit that, first, the verification process merely validates the business rule and reports errors; it does not make any alterations to the business rule. That is, the verification process does not enable the business rule to be edited in the runtime environment, as claimed by the Applicants. If the runtime verification process of Grindrod reports an error in a business rule, any modifications to the business rule will have to be made back in the pre-runtime environment. The Examiner appears to acknowledge this in the Final Office Action, where it is stated that "the runtime verification of a customized business rule [as taught by Grindrod] occurs after the administrator/end user customizes the business rule" (Page 13, emphasis added). This clearly demonstrates that the steps performed by Grindrod in the runtime environment do not include customization (*e.g.*, editing) of the business rules.

Moreover, although Grindrod may teach that "a runtime environment is involved" in some way in the customization, the Applicants claim a very specific manner in which a runtime environment is involved (*i.e.*, relating to editing of the business rules). Grindrod simply does not teach or suggest this very specific involvement of a runtime environment. In fact, Grindrod teaches a completely different involvement of the runtime environment (*i.e.*, verification versus editing).

Likewise, Sluiman also fails to teach or suggest editing of a rule-based application during runtime processing of the application's ruleset in an environment in which the rule-based application executes (*i.e.*, after the ruleset has been compiled), as recited in Applicants' independent claims 1 and 32. Thus, Grindrod in view of Sluiman fails to teach or suggest enabling customization of a rule-based application in a runtime environment, as recited by Applicants' claims 1 and 32. Specifically, Applicants' claims 1 and 32 positively recite:

> 1. A method of customizing a rule-based application, the method comprising:
>
> designating a customizable element of a set as a customizable template, the customizable element being selected by an end-user;
>
> compiling said customizable element into at least one object to form a ruleset;
>
> parsing said set to detect said customizable element designated as a customizable template; and

enabling editing of said rule-based application during runtime processing of said ruleset in an environment in which said rule-based application executes nment. (Emphasis added)

32. A method of customizing a rule-based application, the method comprising:

designating a customizable element of a set as a customizable template, the customizable element being selected by an end-user, where the customizable element is one of: a variable, a rule, or a ruleset;

compiling said customizable element into at least one object to form a ruleset;

parsing said set to detect said customizable element designated as a customizable template; and

editing said customizable element during runtime processing of said ruleset in an environment in which the rule-based application executes, where said editing comprises generating a new ruleset from a customizable ruleset template, and where a pre-existing customizable rule template is associated with said new ruleset and is unchanged. (Emphasis added)

Since Grindrod and Sluiman both fail to teach or suggest editing of a rule-based application during runtime processing of the application's ruleset in an environment in which the rule-based application executes (*i.e.*, after the ruleset has been compiled), Grindrod in view of Sluiman does not teach or suggest each and every element of Applicants' claims 1 and 32. Moreover, dependent claims 2, 4-9, and 11-13 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1 and recite at least all of the patentable features recited in claim 1. As such, and for at least the exact same reason set forth above, the Applicants submit that claims 2, 4-9, and 11-13 are also not obvious and are allowable.

Therefore, Applicants contend that claims 1-2, 4-9, and 11-13, and 32 are patentable over Grindrod in view of Sluiman and, as such, fully satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §103. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-2, 4-9, and 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn.

III. CONCLUSION

Thus, the Applicants submit that all of the presented claims fully satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112 and 35 U.S.C. §103. Consequently, the Applicants believe that all of these claims are presently in condition for allowance. Accordingly, both reconsideration of this application and its swift passage to issue are earnestly solicited.

If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues requiring the maintenance of the final action in any of the claims now pending in the application, it is requested that the Examiner telephone Kin-Wah Tong, Esq. at (732) 842-8110 so that appropriate arrangements can be made for resolving such issues as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

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